

Tin Can Tourists: A Brief History

The Tin Can Tourists were organized at Desoto Park, Tampa, Florida, in 1919. They received the official state charter a year later. The groups stated objective was "to unite fraternally all autocampers". Their guiding principles were clean camps, friendliness among campers, decent behavior and to secure plenty of clean, wholesome entertainment for those in camp. The group known for the tin can hung or affixed on their radiator caps grew rapidly during the twenties and thirties. Members could be inducted fellow campers through an initiation process that taught the prospective member the secret handshake, sign, and password. After singing the official song "The More We Get Together" the trailerite was an official member of the Tin Can Tourists of the World.

Summer reunions were held at various Midwest locations, with Traverse City, Michigan serving as a primary host city. The club spent winters at Desoto Park until 1924. Because locals grew tired of their park being overrun with northerners, the park was closed a month early in March. The canners took the hint and moved the Winter Convention to Arcadia, where the community had built a municipal park especially for the Tin Can Tourists. By 1932, with membership estimates ranging from 30,000 to 100,000, city Chambers of Commerce were actively pursuing TCT to choose their community for either Homecoming, Winter Convention or Going Home meets. The Winter Convention was the best attended and was an economic boon to the host community. Sarasota had its eye on the prize and lured the Convention away from Arcadia in 1932. The vote on the Winter Convention site was hotly contested. Many Canners were loyal to Arcadia, the town that wanted them after their ejection from Tampa. A 250 strong car caravan led by Sarasota's mayor and other public officials, helped swing the vote selecting Sarasota as the Winter Convention site for 1932. As a concession to those that favored Arcadia, it was designated as the official site for Homecoming festivities. In 1938, the mayor of Sarasota indicated that the national perception that Sarasota was a tin can tourist's town was hurting the community and that he would not renew the Winter Convention contract. Tampa offered the canners a five-year deal to return to Tampa. It was accepted and the Winter Convention returned to specially built Municipal Park. The group faced membership declines due to combination of factors, (1) a schism within the ranks and the formation of ATA, the Automobile Tourists Association, (2) an economic recession in 1939 that greatly diminished the number of trailer manufactures, and (3) the onset of World War II. Winter Convention photograph depict a much smaller group in 1948 at Tampa. The original groups "Swan Song" convention was held in Eustis, Florida in 1968. By the mid-70's the club was no longer in existence in any form.

In 1998, Forrest and Jeri Bone renewed the club as an all make and model vintage trailer and motor coach club. The renewal gathering was held at Camp Dearborn, Milford, Michigan. Twenty-one rigs attended the May Renewal Gathering. By the end of the year, fifty members were accepted as charter members of the renewed version of the Tin Can Tourists. The group has grown steadily, currently holding Annual Gatherings in Michigan, Florida, and regional rallies at various locations in the US. Recently Regional Representatives have been added to represent England, Japan and France. The new version of Tin Can Tourists is open to all. Its goal is to abide by the original group's objectives and guiding principles as well as the promotion and preservation of vintage trailers and motor coaches through Gatherings and information exchange.

For additional information concerning the Tin Can Tourists or membership inquiries, visit us at tincantourists.com or via email at tincantourists@gmail.com . For those without computer access, call Forrest cell at 941-302-2415.

Tin Can Tourists

The Tin Can Tourists is open to everyone interested in the enjoyment, preservation, and the promotion of vintage trailers and motor coaches. The only age stipulation is for the Concours d'Elegance, held at the Annual Gathering, it is open to trailers 25 years or older and motor coaches 20 years or older.

Membership dues are \$25.00 - Members receive club decal, two membership/ID cards, quarterly newsletter, and TCT chronology from 1919 to the present. If membership is done online as a subscription through Paypal, dues are \$20.00

Please make check payable to **Forrest Bone and write "Membership or Renewal" on the Memo line**

Mailing address: Winter (Oct-Mar) 4 High Street, Bradenton, Florida 34208
Summer (Apr-Sep): PO Box 489, Gregory MI 48137

Membership/Renewal Application (Please Print)

Name: _____

Spouse/Partner: _____

Mailing Address

(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Phone Area Code: (_ _ _) _ _ _ - _ _ _ _

E-mail address: _____

RV: Yr. _____ Length _____ Make/ Model _____